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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 001230

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR P; PARIS FOR US MISSION UNESCO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KNNP](#) [BR](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: QOM REPORT GETS THE BRAZILIANS THINKING

REF: A. BRASILIA 1170

[B](#). BRASILIA 1103

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Classified By: Charge D'Affairs Lisa Kubiske for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary. During an October 1 meeting with poloff, Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE or Itamaraty) Central Asia (including Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India) Director Ricardo Luis Pires Ribeiro da Silva acknowledged that the September 24 report to the IAEA on the Qom nuclear facility challenges Brazil's prevailing outlook that Iran is building a nuclear program primarily for civilian purposes. Pires shared his readout of President Lula's September 23 meeting with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at UNGA, and emphasized that neither Lula nor Itamaraty knew anything substantive about the Qom report in advance of the meeting. Pires said that Itamaraty was particularly concerned that Israel would strike against the Qom facility quickly, even before sanctions could be agreed upon, if the Geneva talks did not appear to produce tangible results. In follow-up correspondence, Pires praised the USG for holding extended talks with Iran in Geneva. End summary.

Qom Nuclear Facility

[2](#). (C) Pires, who had a chance to review the September 24 IAEA presentation talking points several days in advance of the meeting and confer with senior MRE officials about them, noted quickly and often that the Qom enrichment plant is different in nature from the Natanz enrichment plant. While he believed that Qom production levels could be viewed as suitable for research rather than weaponmaking, Pires feared that Israel would see the facility as an imminent threat even if access to IAEA inspectors were granted. He said the GOB believes Israel has a date in mind for bombing the facility if the Geneva talks fail or if strong sanctions are not established, and sought USG assurances that Israel would not take action soon. Pires reiterated support for the current USG approach to Israel-Palestine negotiations, but wondered if we were taking a harder line on Iran to keep the Israelis happy so that they would make concessions on West Bank settlements.

[3](#). (C) Iran can be convinced to agree to a thorough IAEA inspection of the Qom facility, Pires said, though he acknowledged that this would not necessarily resolve concerns about the facility's ultimate use. He believed that Russia would ultimately side with the United States, United Kingdom,

and France on the core approach to Iran's nuclear program, including a future decision to impose sanctions, which would place pressure on China to follow suit. He suggested that Brazil will be watching Russia closely for clues about how to position itself on the issue in the UN. Pires characterized Iran's recent missile launch as "really stupid" and needlessly provocative to Israel especially, but also to countries like Russia, India, and Turkey. He believed there was a good chance that Iran had received technological upgrades from North Korea since their last missile launch.

Lula and Ahmadinejad at UNGA

¶4. (C) Pires also shared MRE's readout of President Lula's one-hour meeting with Ahmadinejad at UNGA on September 23, emphasizing several times that Lula told Ahmadinejad that IAEA access to all nuclear facilities will be needed to show that they will be used for civilian energy purposes. He said that Lula emerged from the meeting enthusiastic about developing further commercial relations with Iran and skeptical about reports of nuclear weaponmaking, as reported in the press. Pires emphasized, however, that Lula was not aware at the time of the forthcoming report to IAEA about the Qom facility, or at least not about the report's content. Pires also said that Lula asked Ahmadinejad about the Holocaust toward the end of the meeting. According to the GOB report, Ahmadinejad acknowledged that it did, in fact, occur, and then went on a diatribe about Germany and the creation of the state of Israel. Pires described Lula's response to a reporter's subsequent question on Ahmadinejad's recognition of the Holocaust as "unfortunate and not representative" of the discussion at the meeting.

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Other Issues: Visitors, UNESCO

¶5. (C) MRE reconfirmed that Israeli President Shimon Peres will visit Brasilia on November 11. He said that no dates had been confirmed for visits by Ahmadinejad or Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, but said that the Ahmadinejad visit will happen in late November, which would push back the Abbas visit into December at earliest.

¶6. (C) Pires also spoke briefly about Brazil's decision to back Egyptian candidate Farouk Hosni over Irina Bokova for the UNESCO Director General (ref B). Several local publications have criticized the GOB position on this matter, calling it a "diplomatic defeat" dictated by Lula's desire to strengthen relations with Iran and the Middle East. These same reports, apparently based on leaked sources from Itamaraty, also questioned why Brazil did not make the case to promote one of its own, UNESCO Deputy Director-General Marcio Barbosa. When asked about the matter, Pires smiled wryly, shook his head and said, "these are the things we have to do sometimes."

KUBISKE